

in the United States, if there is not a single contractor that makes what you are looking for in the United States, then, by all means, you are going to have to buy that overseas. If there is such a price differential, such an enormous price differential that it is a waste of taxpayer dollars to buy it from American companies—and, frankly, those are fairly minute exceptions—then it makes sense to do a work-around on the “Buy American” law.

But we have seen hundreds of billions of dollars in waivers, waivers that are being used for reasons that you just can’t justify but also through a process that includes really no oversight. On that waiver that allows for goods to be purchased overseas when you can’t find it in the United States, there are examples where a simple Google search could have found the item in the United States, but a waiver was still signed, allowing it to be bought overseas because it wasn’t available here—just no oversight, making sure we are only giving these waivers in the right circumstances.

I have talked a number of times on this floor about a company that folded up shop in Waterbury, CT, a legacy company in the Naugatuck Valley, Ansonia Copper & Brass. It made the copper nickel tubing for the American submarine fleet. It was the only company in the United States that made this particular item.

It is out of business today because of the loopholes in the “Buy American” law. We are now buying our copper nickel tubing from a foreign company. Now, that put dozens of people out of work in Connecticut, but it also put in jeopardy our national security. If the supplier of this copper nickel tubing, which is not something you can make easily—it requires incredible expertise, complicated machinery. If the country we are getting it from today decides they are not going to supply it to us because they oppose the way in which we are using it, we can’t make it in the United States any longer. You can’t just reassemble the ability to make that particular good, complicated tubing that goes inside one of the most complicated pieces of machinery in the U.S. Navy, a submarine. You can’t just do that overnight. So at the very least, we should be getting all of the information we need to do proper oversight on this process of granting waivers.

I have been pleased at the willingness of Chairman McCain and his staff, along with the ranking member Senator Reed, to work with us on this amendment, this sunlight amendment, this disclosure amendment. Hopefully, over the course of today or tomorrow, we will be able to include this in one of the managers’ packages that we adopt on the Senate floor, and it will allow us to have a more robust conversation as to why on Earth we spent U.S. taxpayer dollars on this van, when \$3 million—at the height of the auto crisis—could have gone to an American company making a similar vehicle. That is

a conversation that on behalf of the literally hundreds of thousands of American workers who don’t have jobs today because we are spending taxpayer dollars overseas—for their sake, they deserve for us to have that debate.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. GARDNER). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CASSIDY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Mr. CASSIDY and Ms. COLLINS pertaining to the introduction of S. 1531 are printed in today’s RECORD under “Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.”)

MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. COLLINS. Thank you, Mr. President.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

PATIENT FREEDOM ACT

Mr. CASSIDY. I wish to say briefly that I thank Senator COLLINS for her thoughtful review of the Patient Freedom Act, who after our office has probably reviewed it the most and made several substantial changes that have made it better. I also thank her for her speech, which was a very thoughtful critique of why we are replacing ObamaCare—not because it is the President’s bill but because of things that she described, where people have an incentive not to earn more money and a penalty if they do, which goes against the American values that if you work hard you can be more successful.

It should not be that the Federal Government is discouraging that. I thank her for her thoughtful speech, her thoughtful comments, and her great input into the final product.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

EXPORT OF AMERICAN LIQUEFIED NATURAL GAS

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, for years, we have witnessed Vladimir Putin, the President of Russia, wreak havoc across Europe. Putin has invaded and carved up free, independent, and democratic countries, such as Georgia and Ukraine. He has bullied our friends in the European Union. He has intimidated our allies in the North Atlantic

Treaty Organization, NATO. A principal weapon of Putin’s has been Russia’s energy supplies—specifically, natural gas. Putin has used Russia’s natural gas to extort, to threaten, and to coerce our allies and our partners. He has repeatedly shut off natural gas supplies to Ukraine and has retaliated against countries that have come to Ukraine’s aid.

So 21 countries—21 countries—import more than 40 percent of their natural gas from Russia. Of these 21 nations, 13 are members of NATO and 5 of these NATO members import nearly 100 percent of their gas from Russia.

I recently returned from Eastern Europe. Our NATO allies and European partners are desperate to find alternative sources of natural gas. They are seeking to develop their own natural gas resources. But amazingly, Putin is funding activists who oppose hydraulic fracturing in Europe.

It is clear that Putin wants to keep our NATO allies dependent on Russian energy. Our NATO allies have publicly called on Congress to help them access America’s natural gas. We can do that by adopting my amendment, No. 1582. My amendment would help countries such as Ukraine, our NATO allies, and others access America’s vast supplies of natural gas. Specifically, it would ensure that the Secretary of Energy makes timely decisions on applications to export Liquefied Natural Gas, or LNG.

Under current law, exports of LNG to countries such as our NATO allies are presumed to be in the public interest, unless the Secretary finds otherwise. But over the last several years, the Secretary’s decisionmaking process has been, at best, unpredictable. My amendment would fix that. Specifically, my amendment would require the Secretary to approve or disapprove LNG export applications within 45 days after the environmental review process is complete.

My amendment would ensure that legal challenges to LNG export projects are resolved expeditiously. It would also require exporters to publicly disclose the countries to which LNG has been delivered.

In January of this year, the energy committee held a hearing on legislation that is identical to my amendment. At that hearing, the Department of Energy testified that my legislation is “a solution we will be able to comply with.”

I am encouraged by DOD’s support for this legislation. I am also encouraged by the support of the National Association of Manufacturers and others who testified that LNG exports would create thousands of jobs across America and help reduce our Nation’s trade deficit.

The United States is the world’s largest producer of natural gas. We have more than enough natural gas to meet our own needs and use our gas to bring about positive change throughout the world.

Do not take my word for it. Listen to what the Obama administration had to say. In February of this year, President Obama's Council of Economic Advisers stated that "an increase in U.S. exports of natural gas . . . would have a number of mostly beneficial effects on . . . employment, U.S. geopolitical security, and the environment."

The President's economic advisers said that LNG exports would create tens of thousands of jobs in the United States, jobs that "would arise . . . in natural gas production[,] manufacturing [and] a range of sectors, including . . . infrastructure investment, and transportation."

The President's economic advisers also stated that U.S. LNG exports would have "a positive geopolitical impact for the United States." Specifically, they explained that U.S. LNG "builds liquidity in the global natural gas market, and reduces European dependence on the current primary suppliers, Russia and Iran."

Again, these are not my words. This is from the White House.

Mr. President, Congress has a choice: We can watch Putin use natural gas as a weapon against our allies and partners or we can take a meaningful step to help our friends.

My amendment boosts the security of our NATO allies and friends around the world, and it does so through a peaceful means. It doesn't spend American tax dollars and all the while will help to grow America's economy. It is a commonsense amendment, and I ask all of the Members to support it.

I thank the Presiding Officer.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

SRI LANKA

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I want to speak briefly about recent developments in Sri Lanka where the new government of President Maithrapala Sirisena has taken several important and encouraging steps to promote good governance, human rights, and reconciliation since his election on January 8.

Among the government's initial accomplishments are the adoption of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, which curtails the extensive powers enjoyed by the executive and vests more power in the Parliament, limits the Presidential term to 5 years instead of 6, allows the President to hold office only for two terms instead of an unlimited number of terms, and provides for a Constitutional Council to make ap-

pointments to independent commissions on the judiciary, police, public service, elections, and audit, instead of the President as was previously the case. In addition, the right to information has been included as a fundamental right in the Constitution.

Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Mangala Samaraweera has wisely called the attention of the Parliament to the need to review the individuals and entities that were listed under a U.N. regulation pursuant to U.N. Security Council Resolution 1373, adopted shortly after the 9/11 attacks. The regulation was used to ban several Tamil diaspora groups for their alleged links to the LTTE. However, the new government reportedly believes that some individuals and organizations may have been wrongly accused of terrorist links when they were merely advocating in support of their rights. The government intends to review the list in the interest of reconciliation and reaffirming its commitment to freedom of expression.

I am also encouraged that the government has revived its relationship with the United Nations, including with the U.N. Human Rights Council, and has invited the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit Sri Lanka. I hope such a visit takes place soon.

The Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence visited Sri Lanka in March-April 2015, and I understand that the Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances will visit Sri Lanka in August.

For years, impunity for serious crimes has been the norm in Sri Lanka. The government is working to establish what it describes as a "domestic mechanism" to deal with accountability for human rights violations. A purely domestic mechanism, however, is not likely to be sufficient. The Sri Lankan people, the United States and other governments, the United Nations, and international human rights groups have long called for justice for the victims of atrocities committed by the armed forces and the LTTE during the 30-year conflict. It is essential that the justice process is not only about truth telling, but is a credible, independent mechanism with authority to investigate, prosecute, and appropriately punish those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity, on both sides.

It is also important to the development of a credible accountability mechanism and to the success of this endeavor that Sri Lankan officials consult with local civil society organizations, including the families of the war's victims. They should also invite international bodies, such as the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, to take part in this process, to provide technical assistance as well as substantive input and help with prosecutorial work, evidence-

gathering, and judicial decision-making. A hybrid mechanism, with international experts involved at the prosecutorial and judicial level, will help ensure that the failings and cynicism associated with past domestic accountability mechanisms are not repeated.

I am told that the government intends to work with humanitarian organizations on the issue of missing persons, including forensics, and to resolve the cases of remaining detainees. The United States and other international groups could assist this important humanitarian effort.

Under the government of former President Mahinda Rajapaksa, Armed Forces day was "Victory Day", a divisive, provocative celebration for the Sinhalese majority. President Sirisena, in his Armed Forces Day speech on May 19, said the policy of the new government will be "development and reconciliation", making clear the government's recognition that development projects alone will not heal the wounds and scars of the past. He also affirmed that the reconciliation process must involve truth seeking, justice, eliminating fear and suspicion among all communities and building trust among them, as well as the rebuilding of infrastructure. He expressed confidence that the Armed Forces would now dedicate themselves to the government's policy on reconciliation.

The return of land in the north and east currently occupied by the Armed Forces, and the resettlement of Tamils displaced by the war and the provision of basic services, is an urgent necessity. Some land in the east that had been allocated by the previous government for infrastructure projects has been released by President Sirisena for the resettlement of the displaced, and a small amount of land in the north has been provided to civilians who were uprooted by the war. But this is only a beginning. Sri Lanka is at peace, so it is time for the Armed Forces to return land, support the resettlement of families, and focus on external threats rather than domestic policing.

Unlike the previous government which vilified its critics and locked up after sham trials journalists who exposed corruption, President Sirisena has taken steps to reaffirm freedom of the press by unblocking media websites, inviting exiled journalists to return to the country, and ensuring freedom of expression for the media to operate without fear of reprisal.

Under the previous government, Sri Lanka's judicial system was politicized, manipulated, and corrupted. The new government is taking steps to reestablish the independence of the judiciary, which is fundamental to any democracy. Also significant was the appointment of the Chief Justice who is from the minority Tamil community immediately after the election of the new government.

The government has committed to fight corruption and ensure accountability for financial crimes even for the